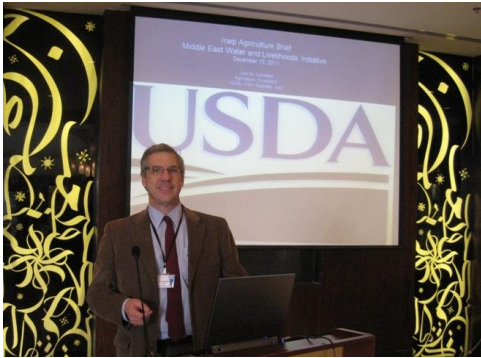


MESOPOTAMIAN MINUTE

- Current News on Agriculture & USDA in Iraq -

Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad

December 2011



Mr. John Schnittker Addressed On Middle East Water And Livelihoods Initiatives: USDA/FAS Economist and Ministry Advisor John M. Schnittker recently addressed the plenary session of the USAID/ICARDA sponsored conference on Middle East Water and Livelihoods Initiatives. Mr. Schnittker addressed current agricultural water use issues within Iraq, and the need for overall better agricultural and water policies to ensure sustainable development within the rural/agricultural sector. The Iraq Ministry of Agriculture is a participant in the initiative that seeks to improve rural livelihoods through better, sustainable land and water management.

Mr. John Schnittker Discussions With Iraqi MoA Officials On Issues Related To Food Security And Productivity Enhancement: USDA/FAS Economist and Ministry Advisor John M. Schnittker recently met with senior Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture officials to discuss issues related to food security and productivity enhancement. The meeting focused on the needs of the food and feed grain sectors to access modern seed and the role that agricultural policy reforms can play to better facilitate a more market oriented agriculture within Iraq. Mr. Schnittker met with Dr. Abdul Hakim, the Ministry's expert on agricultural economics and Dr. Saleh Jabur, Director General of Mesopotamia State Company for Seeds. Mesopotamia State Company for Seeds has shared responsibilities to ensure that Iraq's agricultural producers have access to modern wheat and corn varieties.



Meeting between USDA Advisor & DM of Agriculture: USDA Advisor for Animal Health and Livestock Production, Dr. Robert Smith (L), met with the Iraq Ministry of Agriculture's Deputy Minister of Science & Technology, Dr. Mahdi Al-Kaisey (second from R), and his staff in late December 2011. The goal of the meeting was to brief the Deputy Minister on past, current and future capacity-building activities to support livestock health, food safety, animal husbandry and trade for Iraq. More importantly, this meeting also served as a mechanism for the Ministry of Agriculture to provide constructive feedback to USDA and its Office of Agriculture Affairs on these

activities as well as to its future needs and desires with regard to targeted training activities for specific Directorates within that Ministry. For example, during this meeting there was a specific request for English language training for twenty key staff from the Ministry of Agriculture which the U.S.-Embassy-Baghdad, Cultural Affairs Office, was able to immediately accommodate.

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The FAIRS Country report details regulatory requirements and import procedures for food and agricultural imports to Iraq,

December 2011: The FAIRS Country report for Iraq was first prepared in March 2011 by the FAS Baghdad office, updated in December 2011 to provide a broader insight into the changing import regulatory environment, the introduction of the pre import inspection by COSQC has been a major shift in the normal code of practice by COSQC in handling boarder inspection and stopping the imports of substandard goods.

COSQC introduced in May 2011 the pre- import inspection at country of origin and stipulated that all food products should have a Certificate of Conformity before entering the country.

Personnel Update - There are currently 7 USDA personnel in Iraq at Embassy Baghdad.